

they are witnesses to a crime, whether they are parties to a lawsuit or defendants in a criminal case.

That is one of the primary reasons I have worked so closely with the Biden administration in helping to identify and recommend and support talented nominees for California's district courts.

Today, I rise to highlight three nominees to serve as Federal judges whose confirmation processes we are beginning today.

#### NOMINATION OF RUTH BERMUDEZ MONTENEGRO

Mr. President, Judge Ruth Montenegro is nominated to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California.

She is a proud daughter of Mexican immigrants who came to this country with only elementary school educations—just like my parents. Judge Montenegro understood early on—because of her parents' experience and their journey—the value of getting a good education and of public service, starting at a very young age. She was born and raised in the Imperial Valley, where she returned after graduating from UCLA Law School.

Like so many of us, you are trying to fulfill your parents' dreams, so you go on to college and get a good education. You graduate and have options all over and choose to come home to make a difference.

Judge Montenegro built a career in representing public agencies. She could have made a lot of money in the private sector. She chose to represent public agencies, ranging from the Imperial Valley Housing Authority to the El Centro Elementary School District. She has served for nearly 10 years now as a State superior court and Federal magistrate judge.

Judge Montenegro's extensive judicial experience and lifelong dedication to her community, I have no doubt, will strengthen the Southern District's bench.

#### NOMINATION OF FRED W. SLAUGHTER

Mr. President, next, I would like to highlight Judge Fred Slaughter, who is nominated to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

Judge Slaughter received his undergraduate and his law degree from UCLA, going on to a distinguished career as a prosecutor. For more than a decade, he served as an assistant U.S. attorney in Arizona, Oregon, and California, where he oversaw and tried hundreds of cases, including cases involving human trafficking, bank robberies, and the prosecuting of members of White supremacist groups.

Judge Slaughter has spent the past 8 years serving in the Orange County Superior Court. There, he is known for his compassion and leadership in juvenile justice. Judge Slaughter's long career demonstrates his legal excellence as well as his commitment to providing justice for all.

#### NOMINATION OF JACQUELINE SCOTT CORLEY

Mr. President, finally, Judge Jacqueline Corley is nominated to serve for the Northern District of California.

She is a native of Long Beach. She earned her bachelor's degree from UC Berkeley and her J.D. from Harvard Law School.

Judge Corley's nontraditional path to the bench displays her commitment to public service. After spending some time in private practice, she spent more than 10 years as a career law clerk for the Northern District of California. Based on her outstanding work in that role and the expertise that she built in private practice prior, Judge Corley was selected to serve as a magistrate judge for the Northern District. She has served there for the past decade and is known for her mentorship of current law clerks.

I celebrate each of these highly qualified nominees who will help Californians access justice throughout our State. When people enter a Federal court, they should feel confident in the promise of equal justice—equal justice that I know these three nominees will help deliver. The oversight and judgment of a thoughtful and fair judge is paramount.

Our democracy depends on the public's faith in the judiciary. That is why I am committed to building a bench of judges who will better reflect and understand the districts, the States, and the country that they serve. I am proud to take another step toward that goal by supporting the confirmations of these three judges, and I urge all of our colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

#### ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF GEORGIA SHOOTINGS

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I rise today to reflect on a dark day in Georgia's recent history.

One year ago today, a hateful act of violence shook Metropolitan Atlanta and reverberated across our State, our country, and indeed the world. In the span of just a few hours, our sense of safety and sanctuary was pierced by bullets of hate and fear. Eight precious people lost their lives—eight people who were loved by their families, their friends, their children; eight people with their own successes and struggles, hopes, and dreams.

We speak their names: Soon Chung Park, Hyun Jung Grant, Suncha Kim, Yong Ae Yue, Delaina Ashley Yaun Gonzalez, Paul Andre Michels, Xiaojie Tan, Daoyou Feng.

My heart aches for these Georgians and their families for whom I am sure the wounds are still fresh. They were the victims of unconscionable, senseless hate.

As a pastor, I believe in the sacred worth of every human being—that we are a strange admixture of dust and divinity, of sod and sky, of beauty and possibility.

So I will ask now for all of my colleagues and everyone who can to join me in taking a moment of silence to remember these eight Georgians and to pray, each in our own way, for their families.

(Moment of silence.)

Thank you.

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST ASIAN AMERICANS

Mr. President, importantly, I must mention that this unspeakable violence was visited largely upon Georgia's Asian-American community and especially on women of Asian descent. Unfortunately, this hateful act that horrified Atlanta is not isolated; it is part of a larger trend.

Last year, anti-Asian hate crimes increased 339 percent. Think about that—in 1 year, a 339-percent increase in anti-Asian hate crimes. It is a sobering statistic, and it should remind all of us of our shared duty in our democracy to stay committed to peace, an active peace, that recognizes that we are in this together.

It was Martin Niemoller, the pastor during Hitler's Third Reich, who said:

First they came for the Communists, and I did not speak . . . because I was not a Communist.

Then they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak . . . because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak . . . because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak . . . because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak. . . .

So this is a tragedy, in a real sense, visited upon all of us.

As a student of history and a voice for our State and the Senate, I know Georgians understand all too well how hate and misplaced anger can hurt our communities and how certain parts of our community are so easily scapegoated and lose their sense of sanctuary. And then when that happens, all of us lose a piece of ourselves. So I want to say to my AAPI sisters, brothers, and neighbors that I see you, and, more importantly, I will continue to stand with you against hate and violence wherever it rears its ugly head.

That is why I cosponsored and fought to pass the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act and to get it signed into law, directing more resources to ensure our communities have what they need to seek justice whenever and wherever hate and crime rear their ugly heads.

I am especially proud that my colleagues worked with me to include a provision in this legislation that names and acknowledges the pain and experiences of Georgia's AAPI community specifically and makes sure we never forget the names attached to the lives and the families we lost in the horrific shootings in Atlanta 1 year ago today.

And that is why I am pushing here in the Senate to confirm a U.S. attorney for the northern district of our State, a post that is integral to helping Georgians stop crime and pursue justice.

The terrible act of violence and hate we witnessed on March 16, 2021, ought